



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 5/11/2001

GAIN Report #JA1516

Japan

Market Development Reports

Food Business Line

Periodic Press Translations from ATO Tokyo

2001

Approved by:

David C. Miller, Director

ATO Tokyo

Prepared by:

Karen Halliburton, Deputy Director

Akiko Matsuyoshi, Marketing Clerk

Report Highlights: A summary of current news reports in America's largest food and agricultural export market as translated from Japan's mass media and food press. This issue's highlights include: retail food prices decline 2% in 2000; HMR sozai market grows 3.5% between 1997 and 1999 to \$57.8 billion; e-coli O-157 contamination involving U.S. beef processed by Takizawa Ham sickens 129 people; the French Food Promotion Board begins a two-month promotion for Beaujolais wines; and the German Agriculture Promotion Council plans various promotions for cheese this year.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Tokyo ATO [JA2], JA



Food Business Line

Periodic Press Translations from ATO Tokyo

Vol I, Issue 10 March 30 - April 13, 2001

Wholesale/Retail

- According to a *Saison Research Institute* survey of 357 products in 43 national supermarket outlets, retail food prices (excluding fresh products) declined 2% in 2000 compared to 1999. (a 4/7)
- Requests for extending business hours are increasing under the new Large-scale Retail Store Law, which took effect last June; roughly 70% of the requests in December 2000 were for the extension of business hours. Approvals for stores such as *Mitsukoshi Department Store*, which has been allowed to extend its closing time by one hour at its Tokyo headquarters store, reflect the new Law's potential for greater flexibility. (b 4/7)
- *Sony Plaza* will start selling approximately 70 of U.S.-based *Dean & DeLuca's* private brand products, such as seasonings, coffee, and tea. (a 4/10)
- *JUSCO* announced on April 9 it will begin doing business directly with suppliers to achieve "everyday low costs," gradually moving toward "everyday low prices." (e 4/11)

Food Service

- According to the *Japan Sozai Association*, the size of the HMR *sozai* market was 6.576 trillion yen (\$57.8 billion) in 1999, a 3.5% increase over the 1997 level. General merchandise stores, supermarkets, and convenience stores are increasing their share of the *sozai* pie, while specialty stores and department stores are losing share. (c 4/13)
- Kansai-based food service wholesaler *Toho* opened its first outlet in Tokyo on April 4. (c 4/9)

Food Processing/New Products/Market Trends

- As of April 7, there have been 129 victims in seven prefectures from the *e-coli* O-157 contamination by roast beef and rare beef *tataki* processed at *Takizawa Ham's* Tochigi factory. The beef was sold at *York Mart* supermarkets, but whether the cause of the contamination was the U.S. meat itself or the Japanese company's processing facility is not yet clear. (a 4/8)
- Together with the revised JAS law, a new rice labeling standard began in April. Since the new standard does not allow imitation or blended rice, only genuine ingredients, many wholesalers have rushed to buy the "*Uonuma Koshihikari* rice," pushing up the tender price by 13,000 yen over a two month period. (e 4/6)
- In addition to *negi* onions, raw *shiitake* mushrooms, and *tatami omote* rushes, Japan's Agriculture Ministry (MAFF) is starting to prepare for a possible safeguard action against cloth towels. MAFF is also requesting the Economic and Industry Ministry to consider future actions on eel, seaweed, and lumber. (a 4/7)
- Japanese vegetable farmers welcome MAFF's temporary 200 day safeguard in that it gives them time to reconsider more competitive farming methods. Some farmers are even considering switching to organic farming to overcome the severe price competition from imports. (a 4/11)

- *Marukin Tadao* announced at a meeting of the Japan Food Science Industry Council that some of their health food products containing pomegranate produce effects similar to estrogen. (e 4/6)
- On April 10, *Green Peace* requested the Government of Thailand to take measures against Japan-based *Nisshin Shokuhin* for selling cup noodle products containing GM ingredients, as has been done in other developed countries where they are prohibited. (a 4/11)

ATO/Cooperator/Competitor Activities/Trade Shows

- The *French Food Promotion Board (SOPEXA)* is holding a two-month spring promotion campaign for Beaujolais wines (excluding nouveau) from April 2 to the end of May. This includes an opening ceremony in cooperation with the French Embassy, a *hanami* flower viewing event, and sales promotions in approximately 50 restaurants. (c 4/9)
- The *German Agriculture Promotion Council* is planning various campaigns promoting German cheese this year to take advantage of the large potential for cheese exports to Japan. (c 4/2)
- The *Japan Medical School Meal Association* held the "5th Medical Treatment Food Menu Technical Cooking Contest" on March 10 at the Tsuji Cooking School in Osaka. Twelve teams of 48 people supported by Japan's Labor Ministry participated in the contest. (c 3/30)
- The *Almond Board of California* recently held a seminar at the Egami Cooking School. (f 4/2)
- In cooperation with the *National School Nutrition Council*, the *Australian Meat and Livestock Producers Association* held an "Aussie Beef Cooking Contest 2001" at the ANA Hotel in Tokyo on March 24, choosing the best menu from 214 entries by nutritionists nationwide. (f 4/2)
- The *Japan Pet Food Industry Council* held the "2001 Japan Pet Fair" at Minato Mirai, Yokohama from March 30 - April 1. It was the organization's largest fair ever with 103 exhibitors, 88 domestic and 15 from overseas. (e 4/6)
- The *US Meat Export Federation* held an "American Meat Trend 21 Symposium" on March 16 at the Hotel New Otani in Tokyo for about 200 people from the Japanese meat industry. (c 4/6)
- On April 4, the *Japan Food Journal* newspaper held a preliminary seminar announcing "World FABEX 2001" and "e-Food 2001," which will take place June 13-15 at Tokyo Big Site. More than 200 exhibitors are expected to participate this year with approximately 500 booths. (c 4/9)
- The *Northwest Wine Coalition* will hold its first wine tasting seminar in Japan at the Tokyo American Club on April 18 involving nineteen member wineries. The *Coalition* consists of more than 250 wineries representing the *Washington Wine Commission*, the *Oregon Wine Advisory Board*, and the *Idaho Grape Growers and Producers Commission*. (c 4/9)

RRRRRRRR

Sources

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| (a) The Japan Economic Newspaper | (b) The Nikkei Marketing Journal |
| (c) The Japan Food Journal | (d) The Beverage & Food News Commentary |
| (e) The Japan Food News | (f) The Food Industry News |

DISCLAIMER - *Food Business Line* is derived from major Japanese news wires, mass distribution press, and food industry newspapers and magazines. Inclusion of an item in *Food Business Line* does not imply agreement by USDA or U.S. Embassy/Tokyo; nor does USDA or U.S. Embassy/Tokyo attest to the accuracy or completeness of the translation of the news item. ATO Tokyo cannot further translate or send source materials to users.